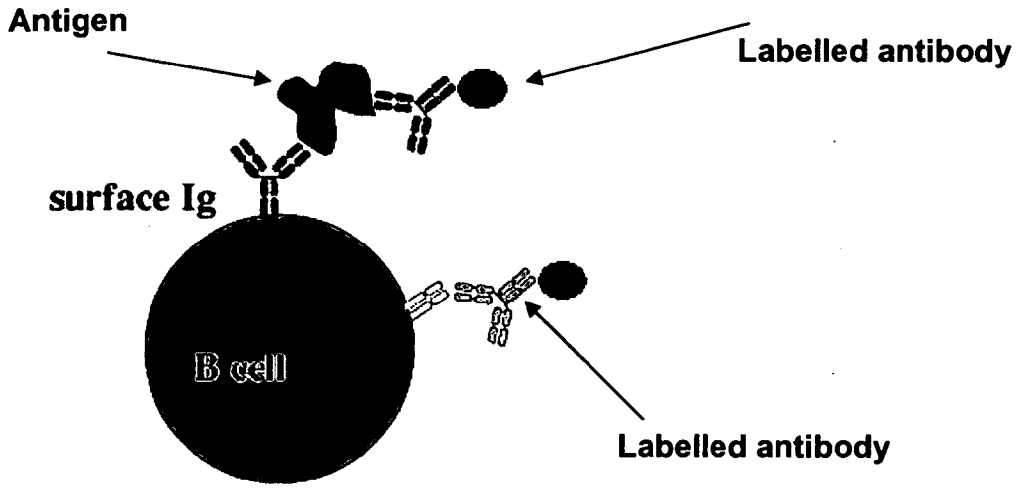
Figure 2:



The next step is then to expose the cells to polyclonal antibodies specific to the antigen bound to the surface Ig. These polyclonal antibodies are labeled. It is respectfully submitted that the Examiner's statement that:

> *"The difference between Chang and the present claims was that the Chang's antigen was directly labeled with a fluorochrome whereas the antigen in the present claims was indirectly labeled with a polycolonal antibody that recognized the antigen"*

is not necessarily an accurate assessment of the difference between the prior art and the present claimed invention. We suggest that Chang teaches a skilled person to use two or more labeled antibodies to label antigens on the surface of a B cell. One of the antibodies may be directed at part of the constant region (Fc) of the surface immunoglobulin. This would only identify antibodies of a certain sub-type and does not necessarily identify only those or all those antibodies against a particular target antigen or epitope.

In contrast, the present method identifies those cells where the surface Ig has bound to the target antigen. There are at least three advantages associated with the present method. Namely, one advantage is that because the target antigen is unlabeled, then the natural binding/association of the antigen and the surface Ig is not disturbed, thereby optimizing the number of surface Ig